

The frustration of Americans is palpable. Washington is in gridlock and ordinary Americans cannot understand why Congress is unable to work together in order to clean up the country's financial mess.

Everywhere I go in Southwest Alabama folks ask me what is being done to get Congress to work together. In a world of 10 second sound bites, and a national media focused on dramatizing conflict rather than giving a complete picture of lawmakers' efforts to reach solutions, the true picture of what is going on in Washington is sometimes obscured.

Since becoming the majority party in the House in January 2011, Republicans have been very productive in passing legislation to turbo-charge the stalled economy. So far, we've voted through nearly 30 bills to ease onerous government regulations on businesses and provide tax incentives to employers, but few Americans know about them. Why? Simply because the Senate has either refused to vote on the House legislation or has rejected them outright.

With a wink and nod, national media outlets repeat the president's tired refrain that the House is doing nothing even as we have passed our second budget to tackle the country's crippling debt and overspending crisis. In 2011 and again in 2012, the House approved bold plans to cut spending, preserve and strengthen our mandatory programs and help create jobs. What was the Senate's response? Silence. Last year and again last week, the Democrat-led Senate voted against even having a vote on the comprehensive budget plans passed by the House.

A reasonable thinking person would assume the Senate must have something better. After all, they surely wouldn't do nothing. Where are the Senate jobs bills? Where are the Senate budgets? As I write this column, it has been no less than 1,115 days since the Senate bothered to pass a budget! Friends, approval of the federal budget is a basic duty of each chamber of Congress. The Senate has shown up for work, but has effectively sat on its hands for three years! And yet the president and Senate Leader Reid – aided by a sympathetic national media – point their fingers at the House for being "obstructionist."

So what are we doing about it? I am doing all I can to work hard to pass responsible budgets to cut the deficit and approve legislation to jumpstart business growth and job creation. Unfortunately, House Republicans don't have the attention of the national media or the bully pulpit of the White House to offset the political spin of the president and Senator Reid. But that

has not stopped us from doing our jobs. Put simply, the House has been doing and continues to do the people's business.

It's not too late for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and President Obama to sit down at the table with the House to work out agreements on the budget and pass vital jobs bills. Bipartisanship is not only possible in Washington, it has already been done this Congress. House Republicans joined Democrats in the Senate and the White House to pass three job-boosting trade agreements, a veterans hiring bill, and the JOBS Act, to name a few. Sadly, the administration has since rebuffed efforts by House Speaker Boehner and other conservatives to have a serious discussion about the budget and other critical economic legislation.

The American people are due leadership, not a president focused on jet-setting to Hollywood. The next time you hear the president and his supporters complain about gridlock in Washington, it's worth remembering that they are largely responsible for it.

### **Alabama's Unemployment Dips Again:**

The latest Alabama unemployment numbers show a slight increase in hiring across the state during April. Overall, Alabama's unemployment rate dropped by 0.2 percent from March to April (from 7.4 percent to 7.2 percent).

According to Governor Robert Bentley, the last time the state's unemployment was at or below 7.2 percent was in November of 2008. However, 154,307 Alabamians are still looking for work.

Unemployment also continues to dip in Southwest Alabama. Monroe County saw the largest decline in the First Congressional District – a one percent drop in the jobless rate from March. Washington County's unemployment rate dipped by 0.9 percent, Mobile dropped by 0.8 percent, Baldwin and Clarke decreased by 0.7 percent, and Escambia fell by 0.6 percent.

While these shifts continue a positive trend in employment, they are a far cry from the average 3.5 percent unemployment rate we enjoyed just five years ago. Accordingly, growing the

economy continues to be my top priority.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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